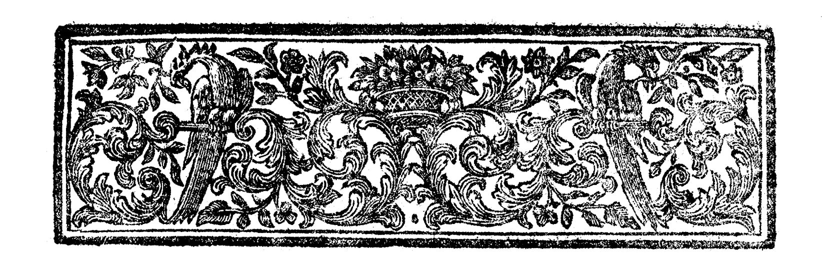


PHILOSOPHICAL TRANSACTIONS.

I. *Natural Hiſtory and Deſcription of the* Tyger-cat *of the* Cape of Good Hope. *By* John Reinhold Forſter, *LL.D. F. R. and A. S.*

Read November 9. 1780.

FEW tribes of quadrupeds have in Africa more repreſentatives of their different ſpecies than that of the CAT. The genus of *Antelopes* may perhaps be excepted, ſince, to my knowledge, about twenty different *Ghazels* and *Antelopes* are to be met with in Africa; but no more than about eight or nine of the Cat tribe have hitherto been diſcovered on that continent. However, I know about twenty-one different ſpecies of this

great clafs; and, I fuppofe, thefe by no means exhauft this numerous tribe.

The greater and more numerous the different genera of animals are, the more difficult it muft be to the natural hiftorian properly to arrange the whole of fuch an extenfive divifion of animals, efpecially if they are not equally well known. To form new genera, in order to difpofe and arrange them under, is a remedy which increafes the evil, inftead of curing it. The beft method, therefore, which can be devifed, is to make great divifions in each genus, comprehending thofe fpecies which, on account of fome common relation or character, have a greater affinity to one another. The genus of Cat, to which the animal belongs we are going to fpeak of more at large, offers three very eafy and natural fub-divifions. The *firft* comprehends animals related to the Cat-tribe, with long hair or manes on their necks; *fecondly*, fuch as have remarkable long tails without any marks of a mane on their necks; *laftly*, fuch as have a brufh of hair on the tips of their ears, and fhorter tails than the fecond fub-divifion. The firft might be called in Latin *Feles jubatæ*; the fecond fub-divifion fhould be named *Ælures*; and the third and laft, *Lynces*. To the firft fub-divifion the *Lion* and the *hunting Leopard* or Indian *Chittah*, belong. The fecond fub-divifion confifts of the *Tyger*, the *Panther*, the *Leopard*, the *Ounce*, the *Puma*, the *Jaguar-ete*, the *Jaguara*, the *Ocelot*, the *Gingy* of Congo, the *Marakaya*, the Tyger-cat of the Cape or the '*Nfuffi* of *Congo*, the *Tibetan Tyger-cat* which I faw at Peterfburg, the common *Bufh-cat of the Cape*; and, laftly, the *wild Cat*, and its domeftic varieties. To the third divifion belong the *Lynx*, the *Caracal*, the *Serval*, the *Bay Lynx*, and the *Ghaus* of Profeffor GULDENSTEDT.

Since

Since it is quite foreign to my purpose to speak of those species which are known already to the naturalist, I confine myself to that species only which hitherto has been imperfectly known to naturalists.

The first notice we had of the Cape Cat is, in my opinion, to be met with in LABAT's *Relation Historique de l'Ethiopie occidentale*, tom. I. p. 177. taken as is supposed from Father CARAZZI. LABAT mentions there the '*Nsussi*, a kind of wild Cat of the size of a Dog, with a coat as much striped and varied as that of a *Tyger*. Its appearance bespeaks cruelty, and its eyes fierceness; but it is cowardly, and gets its prey only by cunning and insidious arts. All these characters are perfectly applicable to the Cape Cat, and it seems the animal is found in all parts of Africa, from Congo to the Cape of Good Hope, in an extent of country of about eleven degrees of latitude. KOLBE, in his *Present State of the Cape Good Hope*, vol. II. p. 127. (of the English edition) speaks of a *Tyger Bush-cat*, which he describes as the largest of all the wild Cats of the Cape-countries, and is spotted something like a Tyger. A skin of this animal was seen by Mr. PENNANT in a furrier's shop in London, who thought it came from the Cape of Good Hope; from this skin Mr. PENNANT gave the first description which could be of any utility to a natural historian *. All the other authors mention this animal in a vague manner. When I and my son touched the second time at the Cape of Good Hope in the year 1775, an animal of this species was offered me to purchase; but I refused buying it because it had a broken leg, which made me apprehensive of losing it by death during the passage from the Cape to London. It was very gentle and tame. It was brought in a

* PENNANT's Synopsis of Quadrupeds, p. 181. first edit.

baſket to my apartment, where I kept it above four and twenty hours, which gave me the opportunity of deſcribing it, and of obſerving its manners and œconomy; as it did to my ſon that of making a very accurate drawing of it.

After a moſt minute examination, I found its manners and œconomy perfectly analogous to thoſe of our domeſtic Cats. It ate freſh raw meat, and was very much attached to its feeders and benefactors: though it had broke the fore-leg by accident, it nevertheleſs was very eaſy. After it had been ſeveral times fed by me, it ſoon followed me like a tame favourite Cat. It liked to be ſtroked and careſſed; it rubbed its head and back always againſt the perſon's cloaths who fed it, and deſired to be made much of. It purred as our domeſtic Cats do when they are pleaſed. It had been taken when quite young in the woods, and was not above eight or nine months old; I can, however, poſitively aver, having ſeen many ſkins of full-grown Tyger-cats *, that it had already very nearly, if not quite, attained its full growth. I was told, that the Tyger-cats live in mountainous and woody tracts, and that in their wild ſtate they are very great deſtroyers of Hares, Rabbits, Yerbuas, young Antelopes, Lambkins, and of all the feathered tribe.

DESCRIPTIO FELIS CAPENSIS.

Felis cauda ſub-elongata, annulata; corpore fulvo, ſupra maculis virgatis infra orbicularibus, auriculis nigris, macula lunata alba.

* Theſe ſkins, with ſeveral others of rare and non-deſcript animals, I bought at a very conſiderable expence, and depoſited in the Britiſh Muſeum, that valuable national repoſitory of artificial and natural curioſities.

'*Nſuſſi.*

'*Nſuſſi.* LABAT Ethiopic. occident. tom. I. p. 177.

Tyger Boſch-katten. KOLBE Cape of Good Hope, vol. II. p. 127. (Engl. edit.)

Cape-cat. PENNANT Syn. Quadrup. p. 181. (1ſt edit.)

Corpus magnitudine *Felis Cati ſylveſtris* vel paulo majus. In genere ſupra colore pallide fulvo, ſubtus e cinereo albo, maculis atris.

(*Pili* apice pallide fulvi, baſi albi.)

Caput Roſtro magis acuto, quam F. Cati, albo; in labio ſuperiore prope angulum rictus macula orbiculata, nigra. *Nares* nudæ, atræ. *Myſtaces* plurium ordinum in labio ſuperiore et ſupra oculos validæ, albæ et fulvæ. *Oculi* figura fere trianguli ſphærici, latere anteriore perpendiculari; *Irides* flavæ. *Pupilla* orbicularis, diurna (nec ut in F. Cato perpendiculari rima lemniſcata). *Lingua* retroſum aculeata. *Dentes* acuti ut in cogeneribus.

Linea albida utrinque naſo parallela, ad interiora oculorum latera. *Linea nigra* paullulum convergens a cantho anteriore oculorum deſcendit in naſum; *aliæ duæ nigræ* ſupra oculos infra convergentes, inque frontem aſcendentes; præterea in capite *puncta et lineolæ nigræ* plures ſparſæ.

Auriculæ amplæ, longitudine fere capitis, ovatæ, ſuberectæ, *intus* villoſæ, ochroleucæ; *extus* nigræ, macula lunata, tranſverſa alba. *Margo exterior* ſacculo membranaceo nudo, lobato.

Corpus ovatum, elegans. *Lineæ atræ* longitudinales quatuor in cervice inter aurium baſes orſæ, in *Dorſo* interruptæ; *Superiora laterum* obtinent maculæ oblongæ, lineares, obliquæ. *Inferiora laterum* maculis rotundis ſparſis. *Abdomen* e cinereo-album, maculis rotundis parvis, ſparſis, nigris.

Pedes

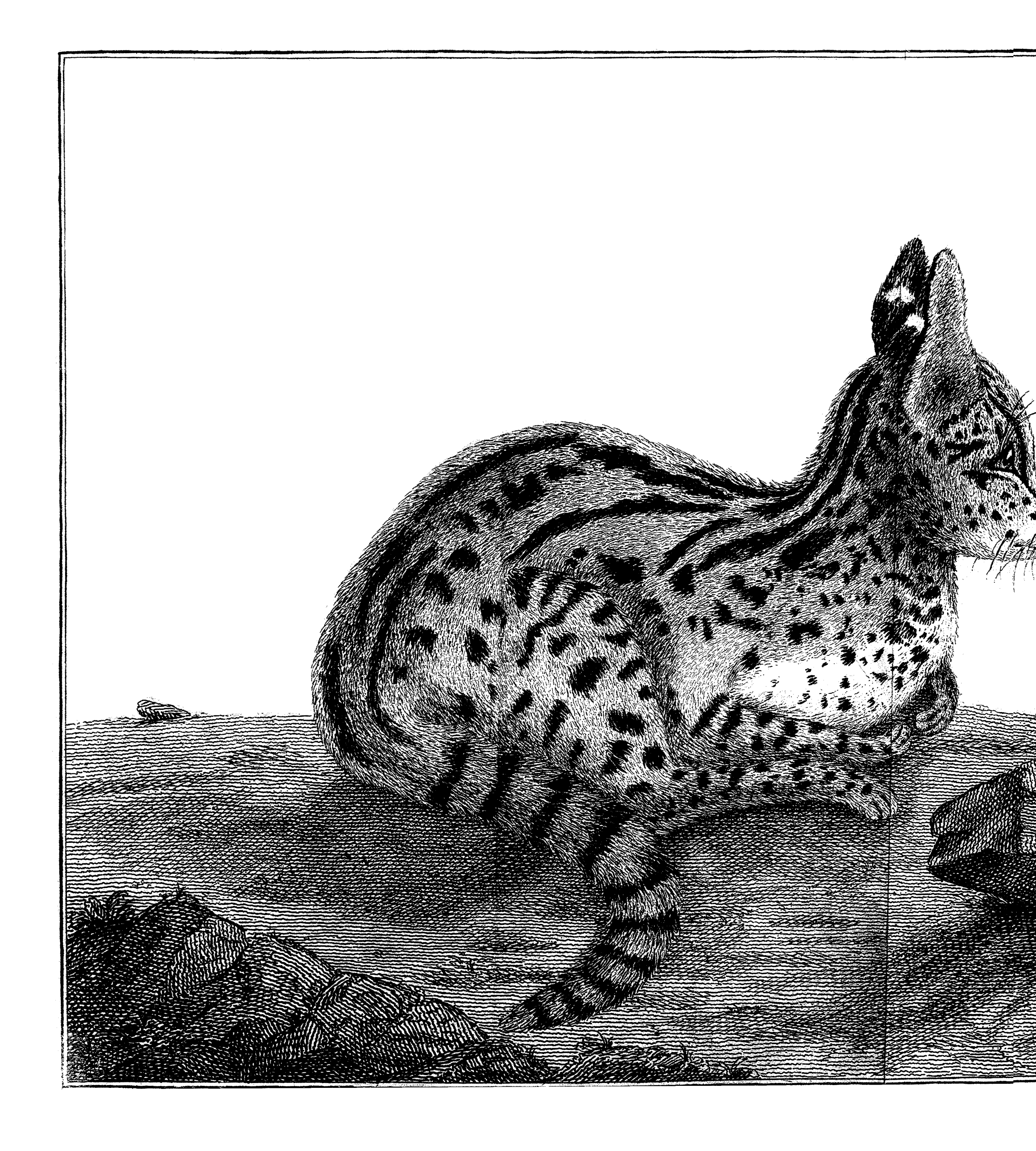
Pedes omnes ſuperne ſubfaſciati, extremitatibus punctis numeroſis, nigris conſperſi. *Digiti* quinque felini. *Ungues* modici, retractiles, nigri.

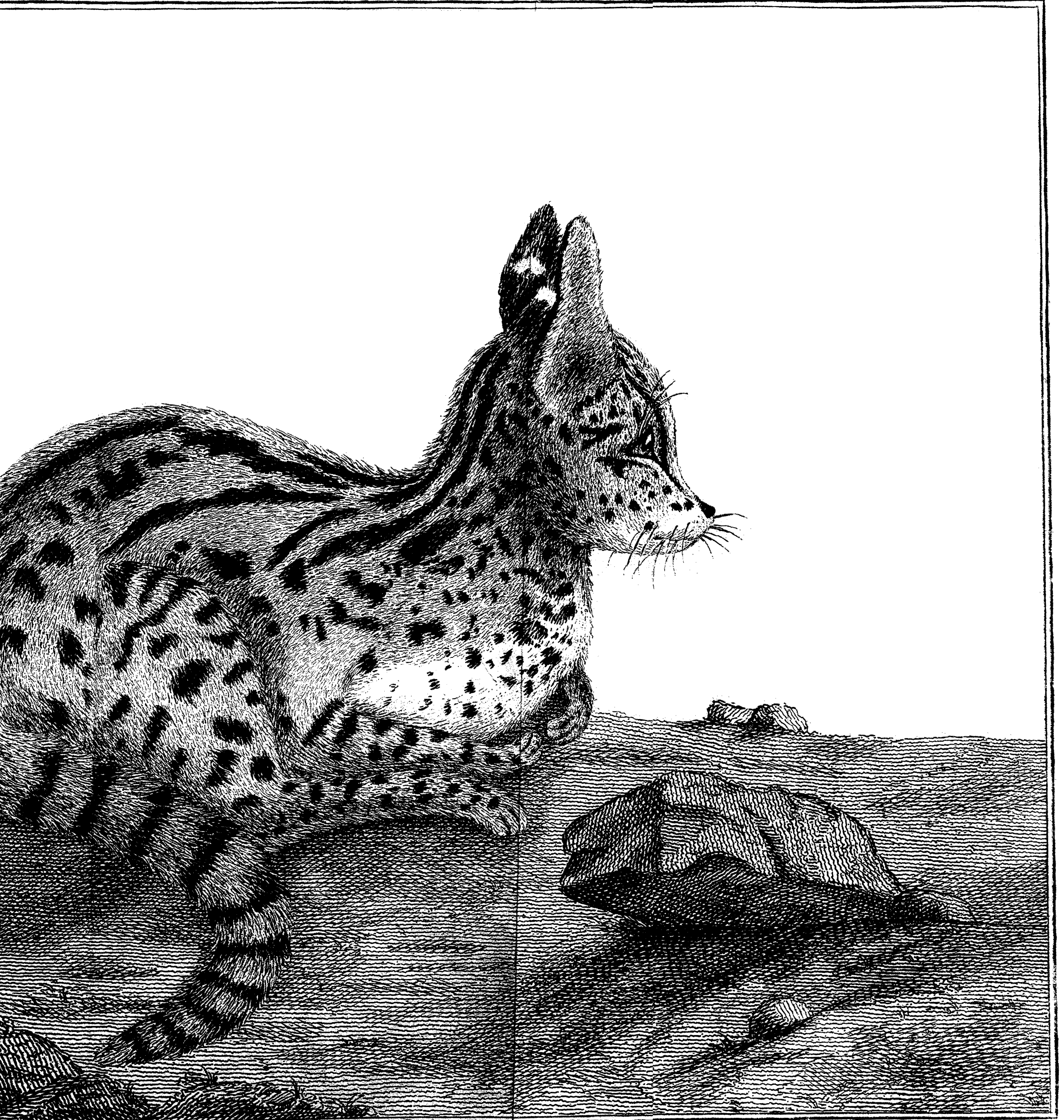
Cauda attingit baſin tarſi, annulis circiter octo vel decem nigris cincta.

M E N S U R Æ.

Ab apice roſtri ad baſin caudæ	-	18 unciæ ped. Angl.
Cauda	- - -	8
Caput longum	- - -	4
Auriculæ margine exteriore	-	3
Pedes anteriores a cubito	- -	7
Pedes poſtici (tarſi ſcilicet)	-	$4\frac{1}{2}$







BASIRE. SC.